



**12TH MEETING
OF THE COPA
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
PUERTO RICO
SEPTEMBER 23-25, 2004**

REPORT OF THE 12TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY CONFEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS

SEPTEMBER 25, 2004, in meeting room C at the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino, San Juan, Puerto Rico

On September 25, 2004, the Executive Committee Meeting of the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA), held in room C at the Wyndham El San Juan Hotel & Casino in San Juan, Puerto Rico, brought together congressional and parliamentary assembly representatives from Brazil, Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Canada, and El Salvador, as well as delegates from the Andean Parliament, the Mexican Conference of State Congresses and Legislators, the National Union of State Legislatures of Brazil, and COPA secretariat coordinators from Québec, Mexico, and Brazil.

These institutions were represented by the following parliamentarians:

Brazil

- Representative Maria José Maninha (Brazil / COPA president)
- Representative Cidinha Campos (Brazil / Representative of the National Union of Legislative Assemblies (UNALE))

El Salvador

- Representative Ileana Rogel (El Salvador / President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas)

Ecuador

- Representative Guillermo Landázuri Carillo (Ecuador / First Vice-President of COPA)

Mexique

- Senator Aracely Escalante (Mexique / Vice-President for North America)
- Representative Leticia Gutiérrez (Mexique / Treasurer)
- Representative Carlos Jiménez Macías (Mexique / Representative of the National Congress of Mexico to COPA)
- Senator Lucero Saldaña Pérez (Mexique / Member of the Senate of the Mexican Republic)
- Representative Gustavo Soto Portillo (Mexique / President of the Mexican National Conference of Local Legislators)
- Representative Juan Manuel Vega Rayet (Mexique / Vice-President of the COPA Committee on Economy, Trade, Labour and Trading Blocs)

Quebec

- Representative Michel Bissonnet (Quebec / President of the National Assembly of Quebec : Host Assembly of the First General Assembly)
- Representative Jean-Pierre Charbonneau (Quebec / former COPA President)
- Representative Pierre Moreau / Quebec / President of the COPA Committee on Education, Culture, Science and Technology)
- Representative Fatima Houda-Pepin (Quebec / National Assembly of Quebec)

Puerto Rico

- Senator Antonio Faz Alzamora (Puerto Rico / President of the Puerto Rico Senate and Vice-President for the Caribbean region)
- Senator Velda González de Modestti (Puerto Rico / Vice-President of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas)

Venezuela

- Representative Jhannet Madriz Sotillo (Venezuela / Vice-President of the Andean Parliament and former COPA President)
- Representative Adela Muñoz De Liendo (Venezuela / Member of the Andean Parliament)
- Representative Mario Salas (Venezuela / Member of the National Assembly)
- Representative Luiz Días Laplace (Venezuela / Member of the Andean Parliament)

After discussion, the parliamentarians adopted the following agenda:

- 1) Opening of the meeting by COPA president, Ms. Maria José Maninha
 - Report on presidential business
 - Administrative business
- 2) COPA secretariat and treasury reports
- 3) Proposal on Haiti
- 4) Information on planning for the 6th COPA General Assembly, to be held in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, in May 2005
- 5) COPA activity and resolution agenda
- 6) Miscellaneous

The meeting began on schedule, with the above-mentioned parliamentarians in attendance. COPA president Ms. Maninha welcomed the members of the Executive Committee and thanked them for attending this second meeting under her presidency. She then read the agenda and welcomed the three former COPA presidents, Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, Ms. Jhannet Madriz, and Ms. Laura Pavón. In a brief report, she emphasized the importance COPA has acquired and the many events she had been invited to attend in her capacity as president. This illustrated how important it is for parliamentarians to represent COPA. The president then discussed *COPA Magazine* and its utility in promoting the organization's work.

Mr. Antonio Faz Alzamora, president of the Puerto Rican Senate, welcomed the attendees and talked about the importance of the COPA philosophy, as well as the principle guiding the organization's work, i.e., achieving consensus. He informed the attendees that he is in the midst of a reelection campaign and has been a parliamentarian for 32 years. Mr. Alzamora then thanked the attendees for their presence and left the meeting to attend to his campaign obligations.

COPA president Ms. Maninha asked the organization's former presidents to address the group. Mr. Charbonneau, member of the National Assembly of Québec, expressed his pleasure at taking part in COPA's activities once again. Ms. Laura Pavón, former member of the Mexican Federal Congress, gave a brief overview of COPA's history, efforts made to strengthen the organization, and her time as president. She expressed her hopes that the organization would continue on the same path it had followed so far. Ms. Jhannet Madriz, vice president of the Andean Parliament, declared that clear skies follow the hurricane. She pointed out the challenges facing COPA and the fact that Mr. Charbonneau's attendance was an incentive for Brazil to manage the organization effectively. To conclude, she talked about the important role that Mr. Landázuri would play as the organization's next president.

Ms. Maninha reported on the missions to Cape Verde for a seminar on gender budgeting, to Ecuador for the Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly, and to Venezuela as election observer for the country's recall referendum. The president described the work carried out by parliamentarians from COPA and other similar organizations during the referendum and stressed the importance of taking part in electoral processes to certify their validity. The president pointed out that COPA benefits considerably from this type of activity in terms of political recognition.

The COPA secretariats presented their activity reports, which were distributed to the meeting attendees. Ms. Pavón indicated that changes would be made to the Mexican secretariat: Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, representative of the Congress of the State of Mexico, will take command and the permanent office will be moved to the city of Toluca in the State of Mexico. Ms. Pavón asked that a representative of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) be invited to join the COPA Executive Committee as the deputy treasurer. Given that the COPA statutes do not currently provide for such a position, it was agreed by consensus to put this issue on the agenda for the next COPA General Assembly.

The president of the National Assembly of Québec, Mr. Michel Bissonnet, briefly presented the Québec Secretariat's report, underscoring certain focal points in its work: preparation and follow-up to the meetings of COPA and the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Americas, preparation and documentation for the Executive Committee meeting, translation of materials into French and English, writing and partial financing of *COPA Magazine*, and, lastly, the management of the COPA website.

The Brazil Secretariat's report was presented by its executive secretary, Mr. Décio Guimarães. Mr. Guimarães informed the Executive Committee of the secretariat's many duties due to its double role also as presidential secretariat and as organizer of the May 2005 COPA General Assembly.

The Secretariat of the COPA Network of Women Parliamentarians, lead by Ms. Ileana Rogel, also presented its report. Ms. Rogel asked the Executive Committee to send her any documents about the meeting in advance to give her the time to consider the themes on the agenda. Ms. Rogel asserted that the Network was seeking legal status, notably to put it in a position to manage its own resources and better disseminate the results of its work to all parliamentarians. It was agreed that the Network was required to operate as a COPA organization, not as a distinct entity. This matter should be discussed at the next General Assembly.

Executive Committee members were then given the opportunity to speak. Ecuador National Congress President Guillermo Landázuri explained the former presidents' initiatives and the concerns raised by the fact that certain states have signed bilateral agreements to the detriment of the future FTAA agreement.

Ms. Rogel recounted the problems regarding simultaneous interpretation that occurred at the Network's Executive Committee meeting the day before. Mr. Pierre Moreau, member of the Québec National Assembly, reiterated the importance of having access to interpretation and translation in four languages at COPA meetings.

The president acknowledged the importance of the four COPA languages and discussed the problems encountered in editing and distributing the magazine presented to the meeting attendees. The magazine will be printed in two versions—Portuguese/Spanish and French/English—and sent to the various secretariats for distribution.

Ms. Rogel asked that Network funding be discussed. Ms. Fatima Houada-Pépin, member of the National Assembly of Québec, backed the suggestion and added that the particularities of the Network of Women Parliamentarians should be taken into account.

COPA treasurer Ms. Letícia Gutierréz presented her report forward and gave an account of the organization's finances. She pointed out that Mexico was the only member that had paid its annual dues and said that an account had been opened in COPA's name in Mexico. In October 2004 she will send each member country and organization a letter requesting payment of annual dues.

The parliamentarians discussed this matter at length. They emphasized the importance of financing COPA's activities. Ms. Rogel stated she would meet with the treasurer to draw up a Network funding formula and discuss the management of Network projects. Mr. Charbonneau argued that funding should not be limited to the Network, but should apply to COPA as a whole.

Ms. Maninha steered the discussion back on track and affirmed that the treasurer should send out correspondence and give an account of the resources available. Ms. Gutierréz stated that a provisional budget was necessary to carry out this initiative. The treasurer agreed that a fundraising strategy must be drawn up and organization expenditures monitored.

After lunch, a video was presented on the city of Foz do Iguaçu and the hotel hosting the 6th COPA General Assembly.

Continuing with the agenda, Ms. Maninha read the election observation report. The committee responsible is chaired by Mr. José Antonio Cabello Gil, deputy of the Federal Congress of Mexico. Ms. Maninha mentioned that the next election observation missions would be to Uruguay in October and the U.S. in November, on the condition that COPA receives an invitation from these countries' respective parliaments or electoral organizations. The official invitation must be addressed to COPA, not personally to an individual parliamentarian.

Mr. Carlos Jiménez Macías presented a proposal on the role the parliamentarians should play in the FTAA negotiation monitoring process. The proposal will be debated at the next General Assembly.

The president of COPA spoke about COPA's FTAA negotiation monitoring activities at the meetings in Quito and Puebla. She noted that *COPA Magazine* contained information on the subject. Ms. Ileana Rogel and Mr. Vega Rayet then mentioned that a meeting on this matter would be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in November 2004.

The president presented a document on parliamentarians of African origin and asked that a place be set aside for them at the next COPA General Assembly.

She also presented the seminar on foreign debt to be held in Brasilia in November 2004. The Brazil Secretariat will translate the relevant documents and send them to the members of the Executive Committee. Ms. Maninha mentioned the possibility of organizing a meeting with the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington in 2004 and holding discussions with the Parliament of Canada in order to build good relationships with COPA. COPA has applied for observer status with the OAS.

The Québec delegation presented a resolution on Haiti, which refers back to the one approved at the last Executive Committee meeting in Brasilia in March 2004. After discussion, the resolution was adopted with a few minor changes.

The Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians proposed a resolution of support for the people affected by the hurricanes, which was also adopted by the COPA Executive Committee.

Ms. Velda Gonzalez de Modestti, senator of Puerto Rico, thanked the parliamentarians for attending the Executive Committee meeting and said it was an honor to welcome them in her country.

The Network presented a number of resolutions on women's rights violations in Iraq, application for diplomatic immunity for parliamentarians visiting the U.S., and women's rights violations in Darfur. These resolutions were discussed, then approved. The Network presented another resolution on the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) and its possible disbandment. The Executive Committee upheld and agreed to distribute this resolution.

Mr. Michel Bissonnet, president of the National Assembly of Québec, insisted on the importance of scheduling a full day for the permanent working committees at the next COPA General Assembly.

Mr. Bissonnet also reminded attendees that the City of Québec would celebrate its 400th anniversary in 2008. He asked that the necessary steps be taken to designate the city host of the COPA General Assembly during the celebration year. The members of the Executive Committee agreed to recommend a proposal to this effect to the General Assembly in May 2005 in Brazil.

Once all meeting business had been discussed, Ms. Maria José Maninha brought the meeting to a close by thanking the participants for attending and inviting them to the next meeting, in Havana, Cuba, in February or March 2005.

These minutes have been duly recorded in writing and legally signed.